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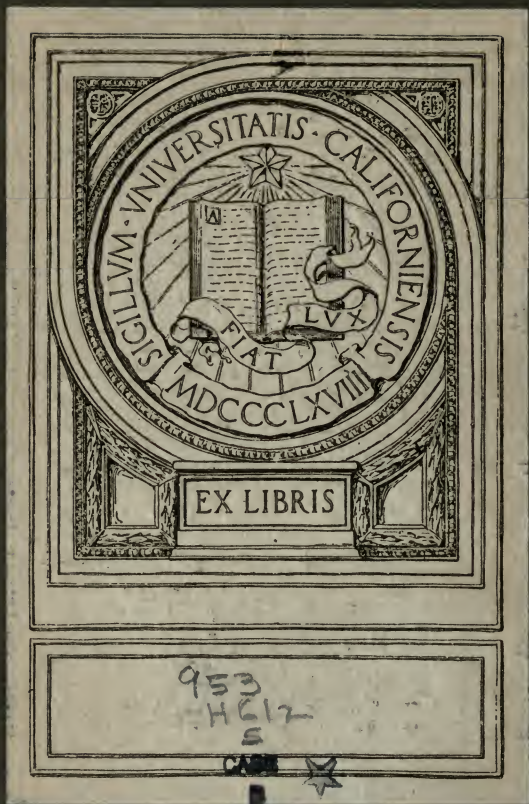
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Old Songs of the West by Maurice Hewlett.



The Poetry Bookshop. 6^d net.

SINGSONGS OF THE WAR

BY
MAURICE HEWLETT



LONDON
THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
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1914

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THE EMPEROR OF ALMAIN.

THE Emperor of Almain
Went rocking out to fight,
The thunder of his legions
Was heard across the night.

There stood a charter'd nation
Upon his road to France,
But Pooh ! says he, What's treaties ?
And order'd the advance.

The Belgian he says, Easy !
And holds him up a spell.
Treachery ! cries the Emperor,
“ This people is from hell.

“ You cannot treat this people
As men of common measure,
Who smite the friendly German
A-taking of his pleasure.

“ You cannot fight this people—
How can you fight with clowns ?
But you can burn their houses
And sack their ancient towns ;

“ And you can shoot their old men,
And do their women shame
For facing of an Emperor
And spoiling of his game.

“ And if you meet civilians,
Don't let your natural ire
Inflame you. Set them forward
Upon the line of fire.

“ Then they're in this dilemma,
That if they shoot they kill
Their own, and if they don't shoot
I work my Imperial Will.”

Now when he got thro' Belgium
And enter'd pleasant France,
He found an English army
Opposing his advance.

The Emperor of Almain
He swore like one possest.
Says he, “ Remember Louvain,
And rid me of this pest.

“ Whate’er you do with Frenchmen,
The English you shall slay,
For they should be my henchmen
Instead of in my way.

“ If they had half the culture
That other Saxons have
They’d know that God has purpos’d
Germania rule the wave.”

We fought him up to Paris
And pusht him back again;
He dug himself in trenches
Above the banks of Aisne.

And there he got the toothache
As common people may,
And had to see his Germans
Be slain instead of slay.

But he saw likely plunder,
A great church made of dreams
In stone, a thing of wonder,
The fair-wrought Church of Rheims;

At which he plugg'd and batter'd
Till all in fire and smoke
It shockt the sky, and shatter'd
The roof sagg'd in and broke.

The world cried out upon him,
But culture soon miscarries
When a man has the toothache
And cannot get to Paris.

And when a man is worried
His wits are not at call.
He fired the church because he thought
It was a hospital.

And so it was, for in it
His wounded soldiers lay
Till honest Frenchmen bore them
Out of the shrapnel's way.

The Germans went on shelling,
With glasses on the fun,
And one another's telling,
"See how those beggars run!"

And so he eased his toothache,
 The Emperor of Almain ;
 And proud should be his doctors,
 Rheims, Dinant and Louvain.

But he must get a many
 Before his war is done,
 And even might have heartache
 If he possesses one.

A SINGSONG OF ENGLAND.

O ENGLAND is an island,
 The fairest ever seen ;
 They say men come to England
 To learn that grass is green.
 And Englishmen are now at war,
 All for this, they say,
 That they are free, and other men
 Must be as free as they.

The Englishmen are shepherds,
They plow, they sow, and reap ;
Their king may wear his leopards,
His men must lead their sheep.
But now the crook and sickle,
The coulter and the sieve
Are thrown aside ; they take the gun
That other men may live.

Some Englishmen are fishermen,
And other some are miners,
And others man the shipping yards
And build the Ocean liners ;
But one and all will down tools
And up with gun and sword
To make a stand for Freedom
Against the War Lord.

The pretty girls of England
Are husbanding their charms,
For not a girl of them but has
Her sweetheart under arms.
And not a girl of all the flock
Would call across the waves
Her sweetheart to her kindness
While other men are slaves.

There's been an English Kingdom
 For twice a thousand years ;
 Her men have plough'd and reap'd it
 Thro' merriment and tears.
 But never a twenty year has past
 Without some stroke's been given
 For Freedom ; and the land is free
 As any under heaven.

The Roman and the Spaniard,
 The Corsican, have tried
 Their worst, and now the German
 Must perish in his pride.
 He may burn and thieve and slaughter,
 He may scold and storm and pray ;
 But we shall fight till even his
 Stand up free men some day.

When he is free of Germany
 And Germany of him
 There'll be a chance for plain men
 To get old Europe trim.
 Then on, you sturdy English hands,
 And keep the colours flying ;
 And we'll not grudge your blessed blood
 If Tyranny's a-dying.

THE SOLDIERS PASS.

THE soldiers pass at nightfall,
 A girl within each arm,
 And kisses quick and light fall
 On lips that take no harm.
 Lip language serves them better
 Who have no parts of speech :
 No syntax there to fetter
 The lore they love to teach.

What waist would shun th' indenture
 Of such a gallant squeeze ?
 What girl's heart not dare venture
 The hot-and-cold disease ?
 Nay, let them do their service
 Before the lads depart !
 That hand goes where the curve is
 That billows o'er the heart.

Who deems not how 'tis given,
 What knows he of its worth ?
 'Tis either fire of heaven
 Or earthiness of earth.

And if the lips are fickle
 That kiss, they'll never know
 If tears begin to trickle
 Where they saw roses blow.

“The girl I left behind me,”
 He'll sing, nor hear her moan,
 “The tears they come to blind me
 As I sit here alone.”
 What else had you to offer,
 Poor spendthrift of the town?
 Lay out your unloctt coffer—
 The Lord will know his own.

SOLDIER, SOLDIER . . .

“**S**OLDIER, soldier, off to the war,
 Take me a letter to my sweetheart O.
 He's gone away to France
 With his carbine and his lance,
 And a lock of brown hair of his sweetheart O.”

“ Fair maid of London, happy may you be
To know so much of your sweetheart O.
There’s not a handsome lad,
To get the chance he’s had,
But would skip, with a kiss for his sweet-
heart O.”

“ Soldier, soldier, whatever shall I do
If the cruel Germans take my sweetheart O?
They’ll pen him in the jail
And starve him thin and pale,
With never a kind word from his sweet-
heart O.”

“ Fair maid of London, is that all you see
Of the lad you’ve taken for your sweetheart O?
He’ll make his prison ring
With his God save the King,
And his God bless the blue eyes of my sweet-
heart O!”

“ Soldier, soldier, if by shot or shell
They wound him, my dear lad, my sweet-
heart O,

He'll lie bleeding in the rain
 And call me, all in vain,
 Crying for the fingers of his sweetheart O.'²

“ Pretty one, pretty one, now take a word
 from me :
 Don't you grudge the life-blood of your sweet-
 heart O.
 For you must understand
 He gives it to our land,
 And proud should fly the colours of his sweet-
 heart O.”

“ Soldier, soldier, my heart is growing cold—
 If a German shot kill my sweetheart O !
 I could not lift my head
 If my dear love lay dead
 With his wide eyes waiting for his sweet-
 heart O.”

“ Poor child, poor child, go to church and
 pray,
 Pray God to spare you your sweetheart O.
 But if he live or die
 The English flag must fly,
 And England take care of his sweetheart O !”

TYE STREET

I KNOW a song of Tye Street
As simple as it's true.
Down there they want the candles out
For what they have to do.

Young Molly lived in Tye Street,
Her mother's name was Moss.
She had no father—God knows
Who her father was.

Yet she grew like a lily
So lax and warm and white,
Yet she grew like a lily flower
That cannot get the light.

She danced upon the pavement
With lifted pinafore
Until the boys took notice,
And then she danced no more.

The war broke over Tye Street
In newsbills and in rags,
And all the upper windows
Showed little faded flags.

And soon the pavement corners
Held stout young men in buff,
And there were clingings after dark,
And sobs and answers gruff.

And Molly had a sweetheart
As everybody does,
And never knew for her part
Why he should kiss so close.

No sooner got than going,
'Twas hers it seems to bless
The waiting hours in Tye Street.
It was a sweet distress.

And so he went to Portsmouth
And left her to her tears
And waking dreams at night-time,
And twice eight years.

And then she had a burden
 To carry in her shawl,
 And had to hold her head high
 For fear that she should fall.

Out and about she took him,
 And whiter grew and thinner,
 Knowing the passion of her need
 That he should get his dinner.

And well for her down Tye Street
 She goes in fear of falling :
 She has need of a lifted head
 In her new calling.

THE DROWNED SAILOR.

LAST night I saw my true love stand
 All shadowy by my bed.
 He had my locket in his hand ;
 I knew that he was dead.

“ Sweetheart, why stand you there so fast,
Why stand you there so grave ?”

“ I think (said he) this hour’s the last
That you and I can have.

“ You gave me this from your fair breast,
It’s never left me yet ;
And now it dares not seek the nest
Because it is so wet.

“ The cold gray sea has covered it,
Deep in the sand it lies,
While over me the long weeds flit
And veil my staring eyes.

“ And there are German sailors laid
Beside me in the deep.
We have no need of gun nor blade,
United in our sleep.”

“ Dear heart, dear heart, come to my bed,
My arms are warm and sweet !”

“ Alack for you, my love,” he said,
“ My limbs would wet the sheet.

“ Cold is the bed that I lie on
 And deep beneath the swell.
 No voice is left to make my moan
 And bid my love farewell.”

Now I am widow that was wife—
 Would God that they could prove
 What law should rule, without the strife
 That's robbed me of my love !

BRAVE WORDS FROM KIEL.

IT was a Teuton publicist
 Whose words flowed calm and true :
 “ I wish to make it clear,” he said,
 “ What we propose to do
 About your fleet.” The sailor said,
 “ Meinherr, it's up to you.”

“ We have ein fleet—in all your days
 You saw not such a sight.
 That was the most almachtiger
 That ever went to fight.”

“ But it *don't* go,” the sailor said.

“ It barks, but it don't bite.”

“ Der bark it is from thunder-guns;
 So has that mighty fleet
 Ein gun—aber so wunderschön!
 To lay it is to hit.”

“ It may be so,” the sailor said,

“ But let me look at it.”

“ The Dreadnoughts what we have in there
 Would freeze you with their thunder
 Of gunnery; also your ships
 Would be their sport und plunder
 If you so out of senses were—”
 The sailor said, “ I wonder.”

“ And we have cruisers wunderschnell,
 Whose valour there's no curbin'.
 They was like greyhounds from ein leash
 When they work up their turbine.”

The sailor mused. “ Perhaps,” said he,
 “ You're talking of the *Goeben*?”

“ There’s plenty more like her inside ;
 She was not all we’ve got.
 Das Wilhelmshaven she is full
 Of what could sink your lot.”
 The sailor said, “ Well, that’s all right.
 Why don’t you have a shot ?”

“ If you could see that splendid fleet
 Which is der Kaiser’s pride,
 You would not be so hot in haste
 Der issue to decide.”

“ Come on, old son,” the sailor said,
 “ We’re waiting just outside.”

“ Der Admiral is such a man
 As is the great Von Kluck.
 These was his two great qualities,
 His prudence und his pluck.
 Und when he shtart— !” The sailor said,
 “ You never know your luck.”

“ You think the German fleet hangs fire
 Until the sea was flat !
 Or do you say we fear to meet
 Our foe ?” The sailor spat.
 “ Well, some say one thing, some another—
 What *are* you playing at ?”

IN THE TRENCHES.

AS I lay in the trenches
 Under the Hunter's Moon,
 My mind ran to the lenches
 Cut in a Wiltshire down.

I saw their long black shadows,
 The beeches in the lane,
 The gray church in the meadows
 And my white cottage—plain.

Thinks I, the down lies dreaming
 Under that hot moon's eye,
 Which sees the shells fly screaming
 And men and horses die.

And what makes she, I wonder,
 Of the horror and the blood,
 And what's her luck, to sunder
 The evil from the good?

'Twas more than I could compass,
 For how was I to think
 With such infernal rumpus
 In such a blasted stink?

But here's a thought to tally
With t'other. That moon sees
A shrouded German valley
With woods and ghostly trees.

And maybe there's a river
As we have got at home
With poplar-trees aquiver
And clots of whirling foam.

And over there some fellow,
A German and a foe,
Whose gills are turning yellow
As sure as mine are so,

Watches that riding glory
Apparel'd in her gold,
And craves to hear the story
Her frozen lips enfold.

And if he sees as clearly
As I do where her shine
Must fall, he longs as dearly,
With heart as full as mine.

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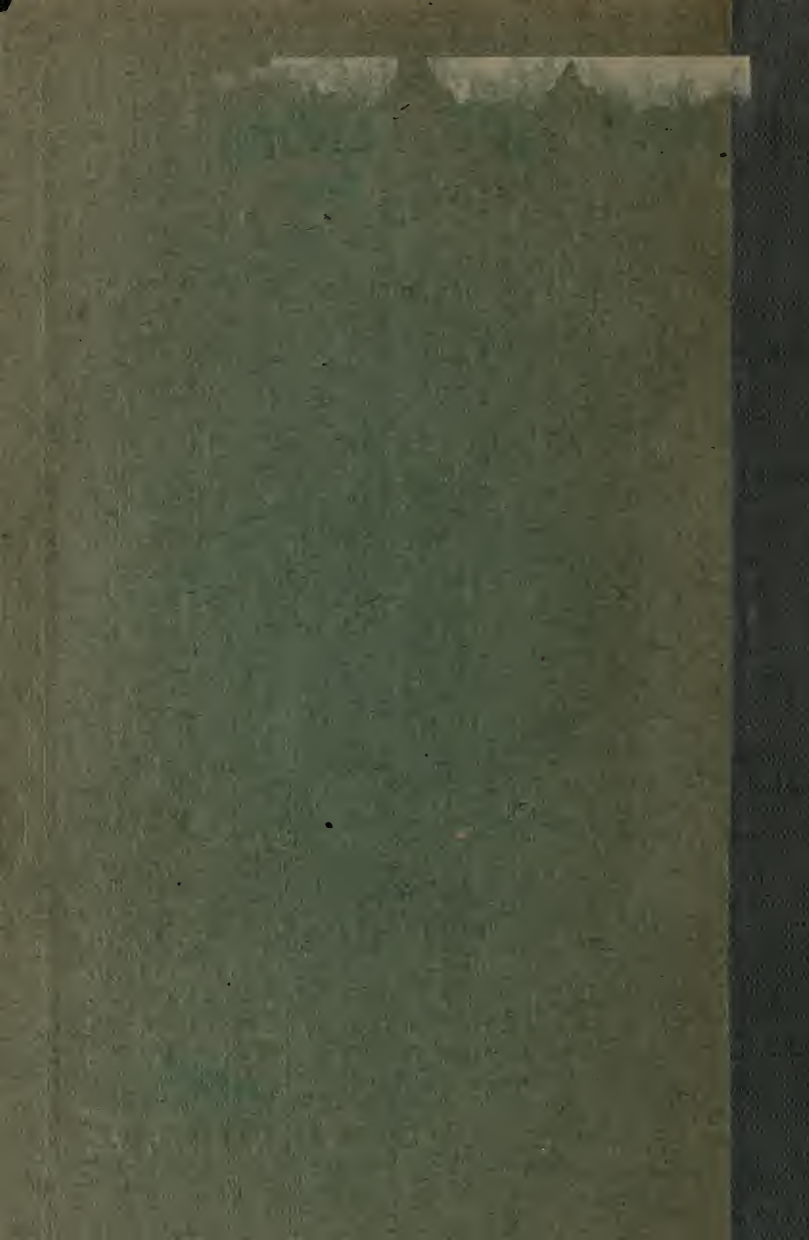
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